



anf position
statement

australian nursing federation

organ and tissue donation transplantation

Where the term 'nurse' is used it includes all licensed classifications including, but not limited to: registered nurse, midwife, enrolled nurse, nurse practitioner.

Organ and tissue donation is an altruistic gift that allows for transplantation, an accepted therapeutic treatment.

Organs and tissues can be donated by people who are deemed to be brain dead, or following death (non-beating-heart donors). In some circumstances organs and tissues can be donated by people who are living (living donors).

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that -

For organ and tissue donation following brain death or death:

1. A person's decision about donating his or her organs or tissues should be respected.
2. The dignity and privacy of the donor must be protected at all times.
3. Health care services engaging in organ and tissue donation must have appropriate policies in place to protect donors; as well as guidelines for the support of donor families and hospital staff. These policies and guidelines must reflect the relevant Human Tissue Acts throughout Australia.
4. The provision of medical and nursing care to individuals takes precedence over the person's potential to donate organs and tissues.
5. Nurses must be enabled to fulfil their duty of care obligations and are encouraged to follow the ethical guidelines set down by the NHMRC.¹
6. Greater efforts in identifying potential donors by health care providers, such as nurses, together with an increased awareness and acceptance of organ and tissue donation by the general public, will potentially increase the number of donor organs and tissues for transplantation.
7. Timely liaison with the medical personnel and organ donor coordinators is essential to ensure that an effective team approach to organ donation is achieved. This will ensure that legal obligations are met, appropriate family discussions take place and the psychological, cultural and religious needs of the families are addressed.
8. Counselling and other assistance must be made available to health care staff who may experience stress during the process of a person's death, organ and tissue donation and care of the donor's family.

For organ and tissue donation from a living donor:

1. All hospitals involved in the donation of organs from a living person must have policies which reflect the Human Tissue Acts across Australia and are in close alignment with the NHMRC ethical guidelines.²
2. The sale of organ and/or tissues is strictly prohibited by state and territory legislation.

For organ and tissue transplantation:

1. Health care services engaging in transplantation must have appropriate policies and guidelines in place to protect the people receiving a transplant.
2. Access to organ and tissue transplantation must be provided equitably to potential recipients and there should be transparency in the allocation process.
3. Effective liaison with transplant recipient coordinators, transplant teams and staff of health care facilities is essential to ensure that a team approach to supporting recipients is achieved. This will ensure that the appropriate nursing and medical care is delivered to transplant recipients.
4. Xenotransplantation¹ is not supported as there is inadequate information about public safety including the effects on the recipient and the impact on health care providers in the care of people receiving either organs or tissues from an animal.
5. Where the donor is unknown to the recipient, confidentiality of information is essential; the anonymity of the donor, recipient and their respective families must be preserved. Disclosure of identifying information other than to health professionals involved in the process is prohibited.

endorsed by federal council september 1994

reviewed and re-endorsed november 1996

reviewed and re-endorsed august 2005

reviewed and re-endorsed november 2008

references

1. See the National Health and Medical Research Council ethical guidelines www.nhmrc.gov.au for more information on xenotransplantation including the decision made by the NHMRC to ban xenotransplantation until at least 2010.
2. *ibid*